

# Benefits of Employers' Associations.

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RESUME of the growth and decline of trades-unionism in Dayton will aptly illustrate the subject, "The Benefits of Organization of Employers," which you ask me to discuss through the columns of THE NATIONAL METAL TRADES BULLETIN.

The Dayton Employers' Association was organized in June, 1900, with thirty-eight charter members, and was probably the first association formed for the definite purposes set forth in its constitution, as follows:

*First*—To protect its members in their right to manage their respective businesses, in such lawful manner as they may deem proper.

*Second*—The adoption of a uniform legitimate system whereby members may ascertain who is, or who is not, worthy of their employment.

*Third*—The investigation and adjustment, by proper officer or committees of the association, of any question arising between members and the employees, when such question shall be submitted to the association for adjustment.

*Fourth*—To endeavor to make it possible for any persons to obtain employment without being obliged to join a labor organization, and to encourage all such persons in their efforts to resist the compulsory methods of organized labor.

*Fifth*—To protect its members in such manner as may be deemed expedient and proper, against legislative, municipal and other political encroachments."

Certainly it was the first association organized on the basis of including in its membership manufacturers, building contractors, merchants and employers engaged in every character and class of business or trades.

At that time Dayton was known as the "banner town of organized labor," a "labor stronghold," and its 13,000 trades-unionists, under the personal direction of several resident officers of national labor organizations, were in practical control of the industrial conditions of the city. The law was openly violated; the rights of business men and independent workmen were ignored; intimidation, coercion, boycotting and lawlessness of all kinds prevailed, and brutal and murderous assaults were of frequent occurrence. Large establishments were in a state of siege for months, during which time the operatives were protected by several stands of arms, with men behind the guns, who were determined

to use them in defense of their lives and for the protection of the property of their employers.

The evidence of deliberate plots for the murder of non-union workmen was conclusive; it was charged and not denied that the intended perpetrators of these crimes were chosen by lot. A considerable number of these offenders were arrested, convicted and sentenced, their fines and court costs being paid by the union, which tried in every possible manner to secure the pardon of the guilty parties. The members of the police force did their duty fearlessly and impartially, but the department was crippled by a debased police court, whose judge and clerk were not only in sympathy with the violators of the law, but gave them aid and encouragement, for which they have been twice defeated for election and under such circumstances as demonstrated that a majority of the wage-earners of Dayton stand for law and order.

The newspapers, police commissioners, courts and politicians recognized the power and influence of this active and powerful force in community, and submitted, almost unconsciously, to its dictation.

This condition had been developing for several years and was accompanied by constant strife and contention between union and non-union employees. With the hope that the recognition of unionism would ameliorate this condition, secure harmony between these contending factions, give a fair day's work for a fair day's wage and promote their interests in general, employers, as a rule, encouraged or enforced the unionizing of their establishments. The result is written in the history of every factory and town that has come under the baleful influence of organized labor—and how few have escaped the blight!

No city in the country has, in proportion to its population, suffered more of wrong, or paid a greater penalty for incompetent, corrupt and law-defying labor leadership, than the city of Dayton; but it is also true, that no city in the world has a larger percentage of workmen who own their own homes, are level-headed, thrifty and who more fully recognize the obligations of good citizenship. They know the evils and abuses of trades-unionism, and while they believe in organization, and properly so, they are sincere and determined in their condemnation of trades-unionism as now conducted.

The loss sustained by working men as a result of strikes, was estimated at a million dollars, in 1900, being wages of 5,000 workmen, for seventy-five days, at an average wage of \$2.50. And this loss still continues as a result of compulsory payment of dues, fines, assessments and contributions for the benefit of "brothers in other cities who are on a strike to protect themselves against the oppressions of labor crushers." They have received nothing in return, no benefits whatever, not even

the strike benefits which are guaranteed by the law of the union, and which, in the case of a single union, amount to \$40,000.

These are not pleasant conditions to contemplate and it is difficult to realize that they existed. They are referred to as an object lesson illustrating the benefits resulting from organization of employers, and for the purpose of emphasizing the duty which devolves upon good citizenship where organization does not now exist.

The strikes of 1900, which included almost every department of the industries of the city, were failures in every possible respect. Not in a single instance were the demands for concessions in wages, hours, reinstatement of discharged union men, cancellation of orders based on sympathetic strikes and a score of other grievances, granted by any employer. In the fullest sense of the word it was "a fight to a finish." Long and expensive, it is true, but it was a victory well worth its cost, for it secured and has maintained industrial peace instead of industrial war. Every strike which has been declared in Dayton has failed utterly, and imposed loss and hardship on the victims, the rank and file being the greatest sufferers because the officers desert and return to their old jobs, often in shops which have been declared "open" as a result of the strike.

The strikes in 1900 caused the organization of the Dayton Employers' Association. The opposition to these strikes was organized, directed and controlled by the Employers' Association, the members of which acted as a unit, and, conscious of the justness of their cause, they carried on a contest with a singleness of purpose, an unfaltering loyalty to duty, which assured success.

The policy then adopted, and which is still maintained by this association, is to insist upon right and justice; to carefully investigate every complaint of unfairness, imposition, or injustice on the part of the employer; to demand that the wage earner shall be well paid, justly and humanely treated, and that each employer shall carefully and conscientiously investigate every individual case, listen to every representation of wrong or injustice from his employees or committee of their number chosen to represent them, correct the evil if it exists, to the fullest extent possible; to deal honorably, justly, generously, with each employee, and, having done so, to decline to accede to any and every demand made by officers and committees representing organized labor, and manfully discharge the duty imposed upon him to defend his constitutional rights and those of his employees, no matter how much of time or money are involved.

It is impossible to describe the change which took place throughout the entire city, or exaggerate the beneficial results of the organization of the Employers' Association. With practical unanimity public sentiment

realizes its power and approves its policy. All classes of the community, and especially wage earners, understand and appreciate the constant employment, liberal wages and fair conditions which have prevailed during these years and given the city a period of unprecedented prosperity, during which the thrifty and industrious class have added to their savings instead of expending the money "laid aside for a rainy day" on strikes, the failure of which was inevitable. A dozen men who are able to "hold their job" as walking and talking delegates, and a small following of agitators and socialists still advocate the policy of organized labor which prevailed three years ago, and avail themselves of every opportunity of recording their condemnation of those who refuse to assist them or obey their orders. The true status is well illustrated by the number taking part in labor day parades: Failure to parade resulting in a fine of from \$2 to \$5, being imposed, and subjecting the offenders to the condemnation, which is well understood by all members. Of the 13,000 members, 9,000 were in the parade of 1900, 7,500 in 1901, which number, according to the report published in the local labor paper, dwindled to 1,242 in 1902, and was increased to 1,914 in 1903, as stated in a city paper.

This early, aggressive and defiant action of this Association has aroused the animosity of labor leaders everywhere, and resulted, recently, in a determined effort by officers of national association to destroy these peaceful conditions, but they failed to arouse enthusiasm or create a responsive sentiment. If any material change is made in existing conditions, it will be the adoption of the "open shop" policy, or even the non-unionizing of every considerable industry in the city. Not only the employers, but 80 per cent of the employees are ready for the change, and will welcome action by the unions leading up to it. It is, therefore, not improbable that Dayton, having been the first to organize in defence of all its people against the wrongs and tyranny of organized labor, will be the first city to adopt a non-union policy, and, thereby, enforce a reorganization of trades unionism, which will place organized labor in control of men of honesty, intelligence, sobriety, true Americanism; men who will so conduct its affairs that it will protect the natural right of both capitalist and wage earners, and not seek to limit or destroy personal enterprise or personal liberty; men who will eliminate force and substitute obedience to law as the agency for the accomplishment of its purposes. That there is a large element of this character is evidenced by an organization based on these general principles, which embraces hundreds of the most skilful and intelligent workmen of the city, and known as the Modern Order of Bees.

And, a reorganization must come, or the 80 per cent of recalcitrant

membership will repudiate its principles, withdraw their support, permit the socialistic and anarchistic element to control it, thereby making it an instrumentality of incalculable injury to the laboring class.

This Association believes—and this belief controls its action—that it is the right of labor to organize for the purpose of improving the condition of wage earners, and that organization for the purpose of promoting the real interest of the workingmen of the country will subserve public welfare. It concedes the right of labor to organize for every legitimate purpose.

It denies the right of a labor organization to determine who shall and who shall not be employed, or to prescribe the amount of work to be done by an individual employee. Its position is in harmony with the finding of the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission and their approval by the President of the United States, in which it is declared that “No person shall be refused employment or in any way discriminated against on account of membership or non-membership in any labor organization.” It denies the right of organized labor to violate the fundamental principles of our Government as set forth in the Declaration of Independence. It advises that business be conducted as “open shops” and insists that union men or non-union men who refuse to go on strike or who take the places vacated by strikers, shall not be discharged on demand of the union, or to make places for strikers who, having failed in the effort to assume control of the employers’ business, desire reinstatement.

Industrial peace in the fullest sense of the term, with all implied blessings and benefits, is the reward which has come to the city in all departments of business, industry and labor, as a result of the adoption of this policy. We believe it furnishes the only practical solution of this vexed problem.

Two local incidents will serve as an illustration of the benefits of organization. About two years ago, during an interview between the president of one of our largest manufacturing companies, not then a member of this Association, and one of the highest labor officials of the country, the labor leader made, substantially this statement, “Single-handed and alone, we can whip any concern in Dayton into line, but if they combine against us, why it will be difficult.” This frank acknowledgment of the benefits of organization aroused the employer to a realization of the folly of fighting organized labor “single-handed and alone.” The necessity of combination was at once apparent to him. He applied for membership in the Employers’ Association, and is one of our most earnest supporters. The union is torn asunder by internal dissensions, and the leader has been retired in disgrace. But the inevitable trouble came; the men obeyed the order and went on a strike; the works were

closed for two weeks and reopened as "open shops." Seventy per cent of the old workmen returned with the understanding that there would be no recognition of the union in the future, and the remaining places were quickly taken by non-union men. Peace and prosperity resulted, regardless of a most persistent and determined boycott, which was extended to foreign countries.

In this connection, the history of three national boycotts which were declared against Dayton's larger industries, and carried on with all the power and influence of organized labor throughout the country, is worthy of reference. In each instance they were greatly beneficial, resulting in a largely increased business. In the case above referred to, additional buildings costing \$150,000 were necessary to care for the increase in business. In another instance, buildings and machinery were doubled at a cost of \$2,000,000. The third required largely increased facilities, and when their goods were taken from the "unfair list" without their knowledge or consent, they were willing to pay \$10,000 for a restoration of the boycott.

The other case referred to, illustrates the beneficial results of a combination of resources, courage and determination. A demand was made by a walking delegate for the re-employment of two men who gave up their jobs in expectation that others would follow their example and go on strike, because they were ordered to work ten hours instead of nine during one week, the extra time to be paid for. Their fellows refused to strike. Failing in the accomplishment of his purpose, the walking delegate demanded their reinstatement or all employees would be called out.

The conditions were such that a strike would have been ruinous, and the employer was unable "single-handed and alone," to assert his manhood or defend his rights as an American citizen. He was directed to decline to accede to the demand; to notify the walking delegate that he had placed his interest in charge of the Employers' Association, and was complying with its instructions. This was the end of the trouble, but a precedent was established which was of far-reaching influence. The walking delegate had learned by previous experience that the Dayton Employers' Association would never yield to such a demand, no matter how much of money or time were involved.

Contrast the gratifying conditions which have prevailed in Dayton for more than three years, with those of cities in which there is no organization, or where the National Civic Federation's policy of submission to injustice, arbitration of rights which are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, conciliating men who violate the decisions of court, prevails.

A moment's consideration of the inestimable benefits resulting from

organization in Chicago, should convince the most skeptical. The Employers' Association of that labor plague spot of the world, under the able leadership of Secretary Job, is fast redeeming the city and delivering its people from the bondage of organized labor; not by continuing the policy of organized labor's colleague, the National Civic Federation, which is the greatest menace to industrial peace now in existence, but by demanding a recognition of the constitutional rights of the American citizen, and then appealing to public sentiment through and by organization.

The extent to which industrial peace has prevailed in Dayton has made it possible to devote much of the association's time and means to a campaign of municipal, state and national organization, conducted principally by correspondence. The beneficial results of this work will be attested by more than a hundred organizations which have been formed or assisted through this instrumentality.

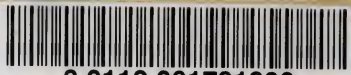
We are thus brought into exceptional personal relations with this great organization movement, and can speak with knowledge and authority concerning the immediate and material benefits which come to every community when its business men organize an association. We are also in position to see and understand the rapid change which is taking place in public sentiment concerning this momentous question. The Americanism of the people, the public conscience, have become aroused; the dangers which beset the country from organized labor as now conducted, from socialism which is its twin sister, and anarchy, which is the consummation, are now realized, and the good citizenship of the country is preparing to put its stamp of condemnation on the combined evil.

But grave conditions still confront the country. It will not do to minimize the power and influence of organized labor, aided and abetted by yellow journalism and truckling politicians.

Organization! Organization! Municipal, State and National should be the watchword.

The Dayton Association is compiling a directory of names of associations and their officers. The assistance and cooperation of the secretary of every organization in the country, no matter how small, or what the business may be, is hereby requested, with the object of making the directory as complete as possible. It will be published for gratuitous distribution to the Associations. Data at hand justifies the opinion that there are more than one thousand organizations of business men which need and desire protection against the unwarranted demands of organized labor.

Their greatest need, their most important duty, is to federate into a national organization. There is conclusive evidence that it is their desire and intention to do so, and that a movement for the organization of



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the National Federation of Employers will be inaugurated before this article is in print.

When this is accomplished, local and state organizations will be rapidly extended under the supervision of the Federation, which will soon be so representative and powerful, that the business interests of the country, aided by the free and independent workmen, can meet the American Federation of Labor on its own ground, defeat its unlawful undertakings, counteract its baleful influence and restrain its evil tendencies.

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